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general management plan amendment



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ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES



NATIONAL MONUMENT / TEXAS



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March 5, 1985

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN AMENDMENT

ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES NATIONAL MONUMENT
Texas

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PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE AMENDMENT

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to describe an amendment to the General Management Plan for Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument (NPS 1978). The amended plan will guide development and use of the area for the next 10 to 15 years.

Even though the general management plan was completed in 1978, the facilities envisioned at Alibates are now considered too ambitious. Other portions of the plan are still considered sufficient; therefore, this amendment addresses only the current development issues for Alibates. This document should be attached to the 1978 plan.

PURPOSE OF THE AREA

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument, authorized by Congress in 1965, contains hundreds of flint quarries and other sites used by makers of stone tools from 10,000 B.C. to possibly as late as the 1800s. Located immediately adjacent to Lake Meredith Recreation Area, the national monument includes about 1,400 acres of land. It is managed by the superintendent of Lake Meredith. A primary significance of the monument is that the flint taken from Alibates has been identified in tools from a broad region of the U.S. Alibates is the only park unit that represents the quarrying facet of the aboriginal technology theme in the southwest region of the national park system.

PLANNING ISSUES

The following issues or management problems were identified for resolution in this amendment: What types of facilities should be developed for Alibates and where? The existing contact station, which is located in trailers at Bates Canyon, is too small to serve visitors and is aesthetically inferior. The road into the national monument is graded dirt with some steep slopes and hairpin curves in places. It is also below the reservoir conservation pool level in sections. The existing trailhead is a small dirt parking area near two gas wells, and it is served by chemical toilets.

EXISTING USE

Visitors to Alibates are generally not the same people who use Lake Meredith. While recreation area visitors tend to come from regional areas, the national monument draws more national-international visitors who are especially interested in the archeological significance of the site.

Year-round use occurs at Alibates, but the months of January, February, and March have the lowest use. School groups visit the site mainly in the spring and fall. Because the national monument may be visited only on one of two ranger-guided tours per day, visitation has remained quite

consistent over the last 10 years, with the number of visitors averaging about 2,000 each year. Because of the consistent low volume of use and nature of public access, a quantified projection of future use is not possible.

Visitors to Alibates assemble for their tour at the contact station (trailer) at Bates Canyon in the recreation area. Depending on the number of people on the tour, the interpreter either drives the visitors in a van or leads them in a caravan of private vehicles to a trailhead from which they hike about one-half mile uphill to the quarry sites. By making prior arrangements, handicapped visitors can be taken by van across private land directly to the quarry area. Some groups are also taken to a site of habitation ruins, depending on the weather, the hardiness of the group, and staff availability. At the end of the tour, all groups are treated to a flint-knapping demonstration given by the interpreter in the contact station.

THE AMENDMENT

The concept for development at Alibates is to retain the undeveloped "discovery" character of the national monument. Facilities will be small in scale to be in concert with the area's limited use, and development proposals will be coordinated with the needs of Lake Meredith Recreation Area. Much of the monument support will continue to come from the recreation area facilities and staff.

The existing visitor contact station for Alibates is in a 660 square-foot trailer near the entrance to Bates Canyon. The facility is unattractive and too small to meet the needs of monument visitors and staff. This site also includes a comfort station located in another trailer and a 23-space paved parking area. There is a temporary sanitary dump station nearby. The visitor contact station and restrooms in the trailers will be replaced with a small permanent visitor contact station (approximately 1,200 square feet) and permanent restrooms to be located just south of the existing parking area. The facility will be of a low-key ranch style design to blend with the local environment. Space will be provided in the contact station for an information desk, interpretive displays, flint-chipping demonstrations, an office, and storage. A well will be drilled or a waterline brought in to serve the facility. As there is no developed campground in the area, the temporary sanitary dump station will be removed.

The existing trailhead for Alibates is reached by a 3-mile road from the contact station. This unimproved dirt road has some steep slopes, hairpin curves, and a section (about 1,500 feet long) that is below the elevation of the conservation pool for the reservoir. The trailhead consists of a small (approximately 5-car) dirt parking area with chemical toilets. A one-half mile trail leads up a hill to some representative flint quarries. Several dilapidated wooden shade structures are along the trail. These are inexpensive units developed by YACC forces, but are none-the-less appreciated by visitors taking the tour up the hill.

Under the amendment, visitors will gather at the contact station for guided tours of the site, as they do now, and will either caravan or ride the park van to a new trailhead location. New trails will provide access to the same quarry sites as interpreted now and also to a group of quarries that are closer to the habitation ruins. Interpreters will take short tours to the first quarry site, or a longer loop trip that will include the second quarry site and the ruins. Handicapped visitors will continue to be taken to the sites by a dirt road over private lands by making prior arrangements with park staff. There may be some potential for handicap access from the lower parking area to nearby flint quarries. Public use of a portion of the trail network will require the National Park Service to acquire rights or develop an agreement with the private landowner for access. This 300-acre parcel includes numerous flint quarries equal to the quarries within current federal ownership.

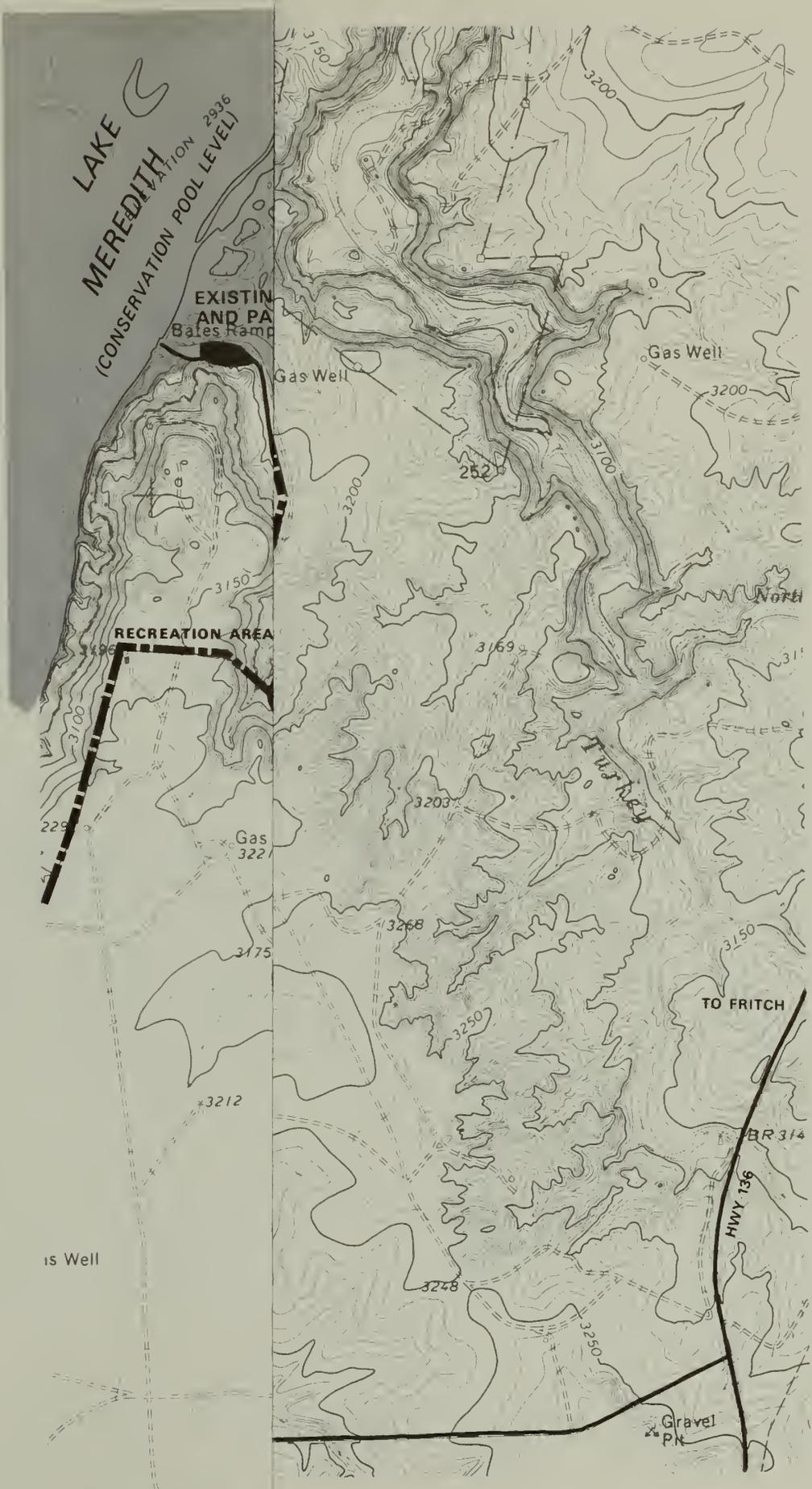
The dirt road to Alibates will be improved to a low-standard 18-foot-wide gravel road. Approximately two-thirds mile will be on a new alignment to eliminate sharp curves, steep slopes, and sections below the conservation

pool level of the reservoir. The upgraded class II road will be shortened by about one-half mile with these improvements. The design speed for the road will be in the 20-25 mph range. The existing trailhead will be relocated about four-tenths mile to the south. The new trailhead location will be more central to the quarries and ruins of the monument, and no oil and gas wells will be visible from the site. Waterless restrooms and parking for up to ten cars or two buses will be provided nearby. Approximately 4 miles of trails will be developed to provide access to the quarries and ruins. Shade structures will be developed along the main trail to the quarries. However, the structures will be designed so that they can be relocated to a different trail in the future (if desired when land acquisition for the monument is completed).

Plan Implementation

Plan implementation for Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument will be phased over the next 5 to 15 years based on funding sources. Phase 1 will include road and parking improvements funded through the Federal Lands Highway Program, which is derived from federal gas taxes. Phase 2 will include the Bates Canyon/Alibates visitor contact station and trails in the monument. As shown in the accompanying table, development costs for projects benefiting Alibates will total about \$1.4 million (gross).

Facilities will be replaced or improved with minimum impacts on park resources and will be harmonious with the area and its resources in proportion, color, and texture. The Park Service will comply with all applicable safety and environmental laws, executive orders, and regulations. Contract documents will specify minimum practicable vegetation, soil disturbance, and air, water, and noise pollution during construction. Landscape plant materials will be restricted to nonaggressive species compatible with the area. Disturbed areas and unneeded roads will be seeded with native vegetation to prevent exotic plants from taking over. Accessibility for handicapped persons in new and rehabilitated facilities will be provided to the maximum extent practicable. The Park Service will use all feasible means of energy conservation emphasizing passive solar techniques in the Alibates contact station. Although the road is located in the flood pool of the reservoir, it will be designed to withstand periodic inundation. Roads are "excepted" from further floodplain management compliance procedures by NPS guidelines. No facility improvements are proposed in areas of suspected flash-flood hazards.

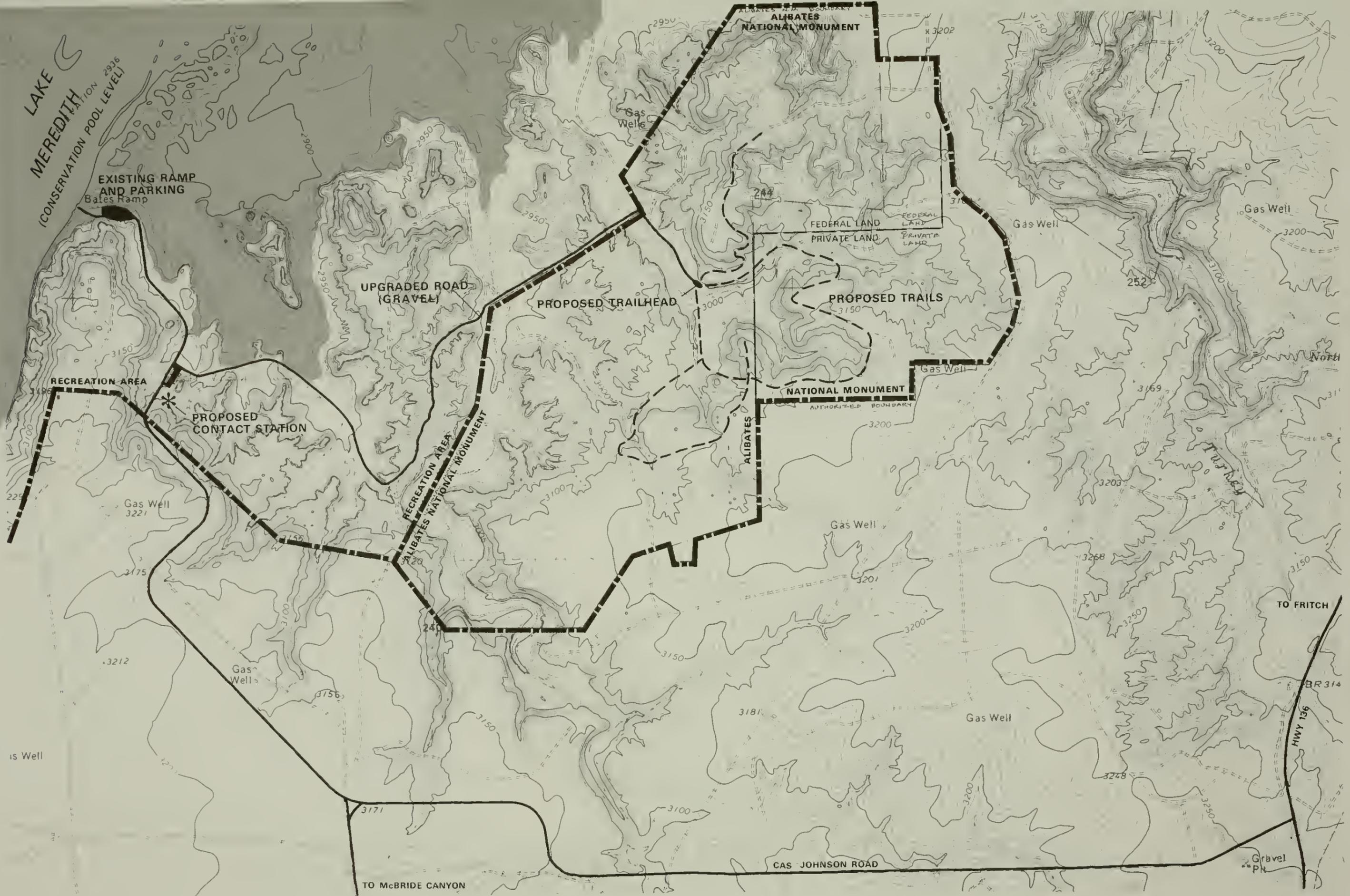


**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT
MEREDETH CANYON/ALIBATES**

**MEREDETH RECREATION AREA
ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES NATIONAL MONUMENT**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT
BATES CANYON/ALIBATES**

LAKE MEREDITH RECREATION AREA
ALIBATES FLINT QUARRIES NATIONAL MONUMENT
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR/NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Estimated Development Costs
(1984 Dollars)

<u>Proposed Development</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Phase</u>
Upgrade 3 miles of access road to gravel surface	\$ 600,000	1
Construct 10-car gravel parking area at trailhead	8,000	1
Construct 1,200 sq ft visitor contact station	162,000	2
Construct utilities	120,000	2
Develop interpretive trails (4 mi)	32,000	2
Construct 4 shelters	<u>10,000</u>	2
Net Total	\$ 932,000	
Gross Total*	\$1,360,000	

*Gross construction costs include 46% of net construction costs for design, construction supervision, and contingencies.

AGENCIES AND INDIVIDUALS CONSULTED

AGENCIES

Copies of the draft General Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Assessment (NPS 1984) were sent to the following agencies for review and comment:

- Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
- Department of Agriculture
 - Soil Conservation Service
- Department of Energy
- Department of the Interior
 - Bureau of Land Management
 - Bureau of Reclamation
 - Geological Survey
 - Fish and Wildlife Service
- Department of Transportation
 - Federal Highway Administration
- Environmental Protection Agency
- Federal Emergency Management Agency
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission
- Texas Historical Commission
- Texas State Clearinghouse
- Panhandle Regional Council of Governments
- Hutchison County
- Moore County
- Potter County
- Canadian River Municipal Water Authority

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the programmatic memorandum of agreement, the National Park Service consulted with the state historic preservation officer and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in the preparation of this document.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In June 1983, a planning workbook was sent out for public review. It presented management objectives and planning options for consideration. Although the response was light, the input was used in the preparation of the draft General Management Plan Amendment/ Environmental Assessment, which was also distributed for general public review and comment.

LIST OF PREPARERS

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As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.

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